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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Six R.I. High Schools Selected to Participate in International Pilot Test**

Six Rhode Island high schools, in four school districts, have been selected to participate in an international pilot test that will enable individual schools to measure their performance against international benchmarks.

The goal of the pilot-test project is to provide schools with assessment scores in mathematics, reading, and science that they can use to estimate how well they would do on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), the largest school-based international assessment in the world. The project will be piloted this spring in approximately 100 schools in the United States, as well as in schools in Canada and the United Kingdom.

The six Rhode Island schools participating are:

Central Falls Senior High School  
Chariho Regional High School  
East Greenwich High School  
The Jacqueline M. Walsh School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Pawtucket  
Shea Senior High School, Pawtucket  
William E. Tolman Senior High School, Pawtucket

Leaders from the schools and from the districts volunteered to participate in the pilot test.

“As we work to accelerate all of our schools toward greatness, we want to compare our schools not only with the best schools in the country but also with the best schools in the world,” said Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “I commend the school leaders in Central Falls, Chariho, East Greenwich, and Pawtucket for stepping forward to meet this challenge. This pilot test will provide a model for a new international assessment, and it will help our own schools recognize their strengths and shortcomings as measured against international standards.”

The test, called the OECD Test for Schools, is being developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which also sponsors the PISA. The PISA is used primarily at the national level (and in some states) to measure educational progress against the progress made in other countries. The OECD Test for Schools is designed to be shorter than the PISA and to provide results to schools more quickly – though with somewhat less detail.

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Schools in the pilot of the OECD Test for Schools will select three testing days falling between May 1 and June 15. OECD contractors, not the teachers in the schools, will administer the pilot tests. There is no cost to the schools for participating, but each school will assign a coordinator to manage the pilot.

In each school, a selected group of up to 100 students who are 15 years old will take the pilot tests. Each testing session will last about 2½ hours. When scoring is completed, each school will receive a school-level report; OECD will not report or release individual student scores.

The OECD cites these as potential benefits for schools that are participating in the OECD Test for Schools:

- benchmarking how well their students compare with peers beyond state and national borders;
- assessing higher-order skills and competencies;
- establishing higher expectations that speak to global competitiveness;
- providing a catalyst for reflection and discussion of school-level practices and policies;
- analyzing performance data that can inform and complement existing school-improvement plans; and
- linking school results with practices and policies from systems and schools around the world.

Note: The OECD and participating countries administer the main PISA assessment every three years. The next administration of the PISA, the PISA 2012 study, will take place in the United States in the fall. The U.S. Department of Education administers the PISA in the United States.

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